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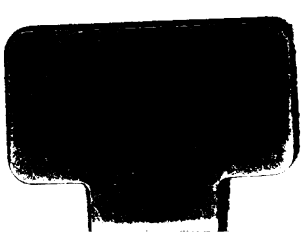

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#9

MORE TALENTS STILL!

BEING

LORD GRENVILLE'S LETTER

TO

DR. GASKIN,

WITH THE LETTERS

IN ANSWER THERETO.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN JOSEPH STOCKDALE,
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ADVERTISEMENT.

LORD GRENVILLE having published, and the zeal of his friends having republished his celebrated Letter to Dr. Gaskin, it has been thought a compliment to both, to give additional celebrity to that admirable epistle, and to the still more admirable answer thereto. We cannot help flattering ourselves that the public, as well as the parties concerned, will think themselves very much obliged to us for the republication of such celebrated STATE PAPERS, which we presume to be of opinion, will be as long remembered as *the Catholic Question* shall be recurred to in the history of the country.

TO THE REV. G. GASKIN, D. D.

SECRETARY TO THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

Downing-Street, May 2, 1807.

SIR,

THE Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, of which I am a Member, has thought fit to publish, during a General Election, a Resolution, declaratory of its opinion respecting a political measure recently submitted to Parliament.

That measure, brought forward for purposes of peace, union, and public security, by men who yield to none of their fellow-subjects in loyalty to their Sovereign, and attachment to the civil and religious Constitution of their Country, is there stigmatized as hostile to the Established Church and Ecclesiastical Constitution of the realm, and as subversive of those principles which placed his Majesty's family on the British throne.

It is natural for those whose characters are thus aspersed, to enquire by what right

any persons have taken upon themselves, in the name of such a Society, to give countenance and currency to an injurious and groundless calumny, fabricated for the watch-word of a party, and calculated only to excite and uphold popular clamour.

The Society was instituted, as its annual publications declare, "for the increase of the knowledge and practice of our holy Religion, by the support of Charity-schools, and by the distribution of Bibles, Prayer-books, and Religious Tracts." Those who have directed the present proceeding can best explain in what manner Christian knowledge, or Christian practice, will be increased by promoting religious animosities and civil discord, by stirring up the blind prejudices and ungovernable passions of the ignorant; and by circulating amongst our fellow-subjects, instead of the word of truth and charity, the libellous and inflammatory calumnies of electioneering contests and party violence.

As a member of the Society, solicitous for the promotion of its genuine objects, I desire to enter my dissent to a resolution purporting to express its unanimous opi-

tion. I object to the propriety of its taking part, at all, in the political divisions of the country: I object to its labouring to extend and prolong those divisions with respect to a measure publicly withdrawn, and of which there is consequently no longer any question. But, most of all, I object to the truth, and, may I not add, to the decency of a censure which, if it were founded either in justice or in reason, would apply to almost every description of public men, and would even implicate all those authorities which are the most entitled to our respect and reverence.

If to permit the King's subjects of all persuasions to serve him in his army be "an unconstitutional innovation," with whom, and when did it originate? It was first made the law in Ireland fourteen years ago, at the express recommendation of the Crown, delivered from the throne by one of his Majesty's present Ministers, then Lord Lieutenant of that kingdom.

If the adoption of a similar law in Great Britain would be "an act of hostility to the Established Church," to whom shall that hostility be ascribed? To those who

now proposed, or to those who long ago engaged, for that concession? To the framers of Lord Howick's bill, or to those members and supporters of the present Government, who in the year 1793, gave and authorised that promise to the Catholics of Ireland.

If the employment of Catholic Officers and Catholic Soldiers in the general service of the empire; if the permitting them to hold and exercise, at his Majesty's discretion, all military commissions, the rank and station of General not excepted; if the relieving them in this respect from all penalties and disabilities on account of their religious persuasions; if these things be matter of just alarm "to the ecclesiastical constitution of this country," when was the moment for that alarm? In the year 1804, all this, and more than this, was done in an act proposed by Mr. Pitt, with the concurrence of his colleagues now in administration, passed by the British Parliament, and sanctioned by his Majesty's royal assent. That act legalised a long list of military commissions, antecedently granted by his Majesty, with the advice of

the same Ministers; and it enabled his Majesty, prospectively, to grant at his discretion, all military commissions whatever to Catholics, not indeed to British or Irish Catholics, but to foreign Catholics; to men who owe his Majesty no allegiance, and who are not even required to disclaim those tenets which all our fellow subjects of that persuasion have solemnly abjured.

What ground of difference will then remain to justify these outrageous calumnies against the late proposal? Is it that men were permitted to aspire to the rewards and honours of a profession, to the toils and dangers of which the Legislature of their country had long since invited them? Is it that the same indulgences which had been promised and granted to Catholics by others, were not withheld by us from Protestant Dissenters? Or is it, lastly, that we judged our own countrymen and fellow subjects entitled, *under his Majesty's discretion*, to the same confidence and favour which Parliament had so recently extended to foreigners of all nations and all descriptions?

And let me further ask—if these conces-

sions, all or any of them, are subversive of the principles "which placed his Majesty's illustrious House upon the throne," what is to be said of the far more extensive indulgences proposed in 1801, by that great Minister now no more, whose name I have already mentioned?—Were *his* principles also subversive of the Established Church, and of the Civil Constitution of the Monarchy?—And if he too must be involved in this indiscriminating and injurious censure, what condemnation will not those men deserve, who, in the very moment of pretended danger, have advised his Majesty to call to his present councils the authors, the partisans, and the supporters of Mr. Pitt's plan? a plan including all that has been now proposed, and extending very far beyond our measures.

On the expediency of these measures Statesmen may differ. To stigmatise them as hostile to our Establishments or dangerous to our Constitution, is to libel both the Throne and the Parliament—to calumniate the existing laws—and to impute to the most considerable public characters of our age, both the living and the dead, principles and purposes disclaimed by them-

selves, and contradicted by the whole tenor of their lives. It is for the Society to consider whether such a conduct be consonant to the character which it befits them to maintain, or in any manner conducive to the objects of a charitable and religious institution.

I have the honour to be &c.

GRENVILLE.

TO LORD GRENVILLE.

MY LORD,

I HAVE not been more amused than vexed by your Lordship's extraordinary attack upon the reverend Dr. Gaskin, and the Society to which he is Secretary; for one naturally feels indignant, though a smile cannot be repressed, when a considerable character makes himself ridiculous. Having so long taken the lead in the contests of the senate, what could induce your Lordship to enter the lists with the rector of Newington? It is like an old actor, who after many campaigns, has been at last hissed from the London theatres, but still hopes to make a figure in a strolling company. Stripped of your laurels in the House of Lords, you endeavour to snatch a sprig from the brow of Dr. Gaskin.

Analogous to the absurdity of your writing at all, is the absurdity of the publication itself; for what can be so preposterous, as for a person who is reprehending others for calumny, to be guilty of slander, and, in imputing want of charity, to

manifest the most rancorous uncharitableness.

Your Lordship, feeling sore at the opinion expressed by the Society, that your Lordship's and Lord Howick's bill, "*was an innovation hostile to the established church,*" might, if you thought it prudent, have calmly proved the contrary. You might have shewn, in a decorous and gentlemanly style, that the Society was in an error, and have persuaded them to retract it. But though the terms of peace and union are on your lips, I am afraid there was something else in your heart, when you asserted the resolution of the Society "*to have been fabricated for the watchword of a party, and calculated only to excite and to uphold a popular clamour.*" What could thus induce your Lordship not to express a hope, that the conduct of the Society might have arisen from an erroneous judgment, but at once, without the slightest reason, presumption, or pretext, to attribute the whole to the most unworthy and factious motive? But this, I suppose, is the style you are used to in your speeches in the House of Lords; and having accustomed yourself to the bitterness of debate,

you can neither lower your tone nor feelings to the good manners of a gentleman, or the charity of a christian.

You rather insultingly ask, what *right* had the Society to interfere on a political subject? Let me answer, the same right which your Lordship had to force it forward. An innovation repealing indirectly all the religious tests, as to the army and navy, which were enacted by our ancestors, to be the guards and outworks of our religious establishment, may be a *political* question, but it is an *ecclesiastical* question too; and if our constitution is so moulded that no religious change can be made by the church alone, it is likewise so modelled, that it cannot be made by the state alone: every member, both of church and state, has a full and complete right of interference in every measure which affects them both.

It is a novel assumption in your Lordship to exclude ecclesiastical persons from the *right* of giving opinions on the policy of removing the guards of the church establishment.

You enter into the defence of your bill, and your defence is as shallow and sophis-

tical, as your attack on our motives is uncharitable, and your denial of our right is despotic.

You seem to be aware of the obnoxious tendency of your measure, by the cautious and guarded terms in which you endeavour to soften and palliate its principles and enactments. Your bill, forsooth, is merely a measure to *allow the* KING'S *subjects, of all persuasions, to serve him in the army and navy. Verbisque decoris obvolvis vitium.* Is this, however, the true statement of your measure, in all its bearings, tendencies, and consequences?

Let me, my Lord, refer you to *Observations on the Catholic Bill, written by a Lawyer and published at* HATCHARD'S. You will there find it pourtrayed in very different colours.

You will there see, that, by your bill, all constitutional preference to the established Church is abandoned in it; that the system of complete and entire indifference, on religious opinions, is set up; that the Commanders of our Army and Navy need no longer profess themselves to be of any sect of religion, Christian, Jewish, or Mahometan; and that the act of supremacy

and all the Test Laws, are entirely set aside.

These things your Lordship must be forced to acknowledge; and then, my Lord, let us look to the necessary consequences. Religious indifference is the parent of infidelity, and infidelity the forerunner of revolution.

You refer us to precedents.—*Precedents are all against you*; for in every relaxation of the Test Laws, those laws are referred to and re-enacted: *precedents are all against you*, for you counsel concession for the sake of tranquility and peace, when it is known, that every concession of the present Reign to the Catholic, great and numerous as they have been, have been turned into grounds of new demand, and made pretences of fresh discontents. *Precedents are all against you*, for when you recite an act, enabling the KING to levy foreign soldiers during the war, are you not ashamed to construe a temporary measure, adopted for a temporary purpose, upon an immediate pressure, as a ground for altering the fundamental principles of the constitution, for ever? What would you think of the Statesman who was to bring in a bill to

repeal the Habeas Corpus Act, and found it on the precedent of its temporary suspension? What would you say to the absurdity of arguing the exception to a rule to be the rule itself. *The precedents are all against you*, for when you refer to Mr. Pitt's measure, what was the case?—Was there not one universal cry throughout the country against the measure then in contemplation? did not the resistance of the MONARCH, and the cry of the Nation, induce Mr. PITT to abandon it?—But did Mr. PITT then accuse his KING to his People; did he move resolutions of censure on him in Parliament? Did he term the resistance of the Clergy, at that period, inflammatory, libellous, defamatory?—No, my Lord, he took a far different line of conduct—he retired, as he thought it his duty, from the Cabinet, maintaining to his Royal Master, a demeanor of the most dutiful and affectionate respect; and having retired, still supported his government. In Parliament, he maintained a conscientious and constitutional reserve on his SOVEREIGN's conduct;—knowing, that the measure in which he had been engaged

could never be carried into beneficial effect, unless it was cordially supported by the KING, and acquiesced in by the Nation; and seeing no new prospect of such a conjuncture, he could not bring himself to keep the Country in perpetual disquiet and irritation on so dangerous a subject; but, according to the suggestion of his manly mind, he gave an assurance to his SOVEREIGN, and an intimation to the Catholics that he would never revive the question.

Your Lordship, with the utmost haughtiness of tone, assumes that the policy of your measure is so unquestionable as utterly to preclude discussion: no common subject is to venture a doubt on the *principle*, and even a Statesman is merely allowed to question its *expediency*.—To call your measures *hostile to the establishment, and dangerous to the Constitution*, is, in your Lordship's temperate language, *to libel both the Throne and the Parliament, to calumniate the existing laws, and to insult both the living and the dead.*

One would think, my Lord, upon reading this denunciation, that you had lost

your understanding with your office, and doubled your pride and arrogance.

I beg leave, my Lord, to protest against that despotism which usurps the claim to *infallibility*, that will suffer no one but a Statesman, forsooth, to discuss the repeal of the Test Laws, and lays every man who dares oppose innovation under a ban of interdict. I will be bold, my Lord, to assert, that the Vatican, in the height of its power, never fulminated a more insolent anathema,

What, my Lord! if I dare to represent your Lordship's measure according to the dictates of my judgment and conscience, am I to be held up to the nation as a *libeller of my Sovereign, a libeller of the Parliament, a libeller of the laws, and a calumniator of the living and the dead*? This is really out-heroding HEROD: My *Lord Peter*, in the *Tale of a Tub*, is quite tame in comparison: But I suppose this is the style of your Cabinet minutes;—this is the way in which you treat your SOVEREIGN: How then can DR. GASKIN expect a milder language? He, however, good man, and our Society, will console our-

selves that we are not worse used by you than your Royal Master: You dragged him before the tribunal of the nation, and you have dragged us too: you tried to pass a vote of censure on your King, and you cover us with the foulest reproaches. We must be content to suffer with our Sovereign in one common cause, and to kiss the rod with patience, when laid on by your tender and forbearing hand.

Is it, my Lord, by such conduct as this that you hope to retrieve your lost popularity? Is it by such language as your letter contains, that you hope to make an impression on the Electors of Great Britain? Be assured, my Lord, if the people of England detest any character, it is that of supercilious and despotic haughtiness, which admits neither of contradiction nor dissent, and which endeavours not to conciliate or persuade, but to force its measures by ministerial menace and aristocratic combination.

I might admit, my Lord, that if the Society to which we belong had published a comment on your political measures; if we had published a censure on your sending 1300 veterans upon a *wild, mad, and roman-*

tic expedition against Spanish America; if we had issued a censure upon your disgraceful and despicable project of conquering the Ottoman Empire with seven sail of the line, the former wasting our force, and the latter disgracing it, there might have been some ground for the severity of your reproaches; but when a lay lord issues a prohibition against clergymen being vigilant for the church; when a discarded statesman forbids the examination of the measure for which he was dismissed; and when he insists that those who are most concerned to maintain the test laws, have no right to defend them, or publish their honest opinions, I must expose the arrogance of such an attempt, if made in a serious hour; or I must pity it, if dictated by disappointment and rage.

A Member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

TO LORD GRENVILLE.

MY LORD,

I HOPE the Society to which we belong will shew indulgence to my inadequate exertions in their defence, and that my friend Dr. GASKIN will forgive me, if in pleading his cause I should have used arguments and adduced topics which his better judgment would not have selected. But Dr. GASKIN is too sincerely and too constantly employed in attention to his professional duties, to enter into a controversy with Newspaper Writers, even when Lord GRENVILLE assumes that character. Your Lordship, on the contrary, has no longer any duty or employment whatsoever to distract you from the full and undivided exertion of your talents on the field of diurnal polemics. He must constrain himself to the laborious, but pleasing duties of his Christian occupation. Whilst your Lordship engages your idle hours in illustrating the pages of a Party Journal; he has a superior duty to perform: your Lordship is

at leisure to give yourself up body and soul to a Party Editor. I trust you will prove a profitable ornament to his pleasing vehicle of intelligence, the columns of which will with pleasure be yielded to your luminous Essays.

Ecce tibi jura brachia contrahit ardens
Scorpius & pista cœli plus parte reliquit.

The inhabitant of the cellar resigns his paragraph, and the garreteer his puff, without a sigh, to admit your Lordship as a competitor in their efforts for the approbation of the coffee-house, or the applause of the tea-table.

But I see you are treated with double honours, and in hopes of creating a continuation of your contributions, your letter is re-published.

Hæc placuit semel hæc duces repetitu placebit.
This pleases once, but this tentimes will please.

I trust your Lordship is not angry that I should treat you in a strain, however alien to your humour and unknown to your habits, with jocularity and pleasantness; as when one a second time adverts to your letter, irascibility is entirely disarmed by its peculiar absurdity.

The inimitable ridicule of the *Tale of a Tub* is constantly in the mind of every man, whenever the mention of Popery, or of any thing that can be connected with Popery by the most distant relation, crosses the mind.—When *Lord Peter* takes a slice of his tenpenny loaf, and tells MARTIN and JACK, that if they do not believe it to be the quintessence of beef, mutton, venison, and partridge, they may be damned to all eternity—the ridicule is irresistible. I am sure your Lordship can say the passage by heart, and correct my irregular quotation: but what could induce you, knowing the ridicule, and possibly feeling it, to adopt Lord PETER's tone, assume his very language, and play the part to the exactness of imitation!

"There is but one possible ground on which your Lordship's and Lord Howick's Bill can be resisted, viz. *that it is an innovation dangerous to the Church Establishment.* It is upon this ground and this ground only, that the repeal of the Test Laws has been opposed for a century. And what then is your Lordship's conduct? In the true style of my *Lord Peter* you proclaim, that your bill was produced for the purposes of

peace, union, and public safety; and that whoever says it is a *dangerous innovation* is a *calumniator of the living and the dead,-a libeller of the Laws, of the Parliament, and the* KING, and I suppose, in *Lord Peter's* language, may be damned to all eternity; and so you bid them heartily farewell.

Now I fairly submit to your Lordship, if you have any sense of ridicule, whether it is possible for any passage to be more ridiculous. Your Lordship having recently been Prime Minister of the country, it was not very wise in you to become a Newspaper Writer; but when you engaged as a Journalist, you ought not to have immediately indulged yourself, not only in the liberties, but in the licentiousness of the press. Having become a Newspaper Writer, I think you should have endeavoured to manifest a correctness of sentiment, and a temperance of style, as if you meant, in becoming a daily author, to refine the pages of a Newspaper, and to give them a classic and chaste purity. The Editors of the Public Prints are so pressed and hurried, that they really have not time to criticise and correct all the letters and para-

graphs that are heaped on them by the ardent impatience of scribblers. But when they get a recent Prime Minister, and Auditor of the Exchequer, a Peer of Parliament, and a first-rate orator to engage in their service, they feel secure, and conceive there can be no occasion for their superintending corrections. Is it not then singular, that you would have set an example of indecorum and licentiousness, which the press in its loosest and most unbridled hour never surpassed.

I ask your Lordship, whether at any period you can recollect, either during the remarkable sauciness of WILKES, or the malignancy of Junius, any person had the hardihood to represent the Monarch as a *Libeller of Himself*, and thus in the most wanton terms to accuse his Sovereign in a public paper, with his name affixed to the accusation, of ridiculous or criminal inconsistency?

I will allow your Lordship has not done this in a dull, stupid, direct, positive charge, saying, The KING is a libeller of himself, the KING is guilty of criminal inconsistency. No, my Lord, if you had done so, even the Party Editor would not

have published your letter. But your Lordship being an adept in Parliamentary trick and evasion, and understanding how to convey abuse according to the forms of the House, has contrived to state the sentiment in such a way, that it should be equally felt, as if it were spoken directly; and equally free from indictment, as if it had not been spoken at all.

Let me put seriously and home to your Lordship's breast this single question. Upon what ground does your Lordship believe, that his MAJESTY resisted Mr. PITT's Cabinet suggestions in 1800, and your Lordship's and Lord HOWICK's bill in 1807? Do you not, as an honest man, believe, that His MAJESTY resisted them as *innovations, in his conscience, dangerous to the Church Establishment?* Your Lordship must one day appear before a high tribunal, where you cannot either deny or equivocate, and I ask you, as you know you must appear before that tribunal, whether you do not believe, that this was the main fundamental consideration operating upon his MAJESTY's mind? I say this with the more confidence, because I will defy your

Lordship or any man whatever, to place the objection to repealing the test laws upon any other ground. What, then, my Lord, has been the conduct of myself, of Dr. GASKIN, and the Society to which we belong? We believe his MAJESTY has acted on the principles I have stated; we approve those principles, and we adopt them, because we consider them as true and just grounds for opposing the repealing of the Test Laws, and that they are the *only true and just grounds* for objecting to their repeal. As we have adopted this ground, what does your Lordship call us? *Libellers of our King.* What then is the King? By the unavoidable inference drawn from your Lordship's charge, *the King is a libeller of himself.* Your Lordship knows and feels that our SOVEREIGN objected to your measures because he conscientiously believed them *innovations dangerous to the Established Church.* We have expressed a complete coincidence of sentiment. *We are therefore libellers of His Majesty—what then is His Majesty himself?*

I own, my Lord, when I review the conduct of your Lordship, and that of my friend Dr. GASKIN, and the Society to

which we belong, I cannot sufficiently congratulate ourselves and the country on the late measures of His MAJESTY, and of your dismissal from office; for I feel certain, that if your Lordship and your abettors had, by threats and importunities, forced His MAJESTY into submission to your bill, we should still have taken exactly the same part we have taken; we should have declared our sentiments in the same manner, and published our obnoxious resolutions in the same words. How lamentable then would have been our case? You would have, of course, as Prime Minister, aided by your Cabinet, (the KING being in a state of non-resistance), acted as you have done at present, with this difference; that at present you act with the impotence of an individual, and you would have then acted with the whole power of government. You would then naturally have resorted not to the Party Editor, but to the Privy Council; not to a Party Journal, but to a State Proclamation, for the publication of your resentment, and we should have seen ourselves proscribed in a Government Manifesto, as promoters of

religious discord, and as libellers of the KING, the Parliament, and the Laws. What prosecutions might have followed, what convictions, what punishments in such a state of government, I dread to think upon. The danger is however at an end, and I console myself with innocently laughing at your Lordship's chagrin and disappointment, and with rescuing my friend Dr. GASKIN from the trouble of replying to you, or from any anxiety at your attacks or your calumnies.

At our next meeting, my Lord, we shall take no more notice of your Lordship's letter than of any anonymous squib. It will never be the business of our board to consider of a reply. We shall laugh with each other in corners individually, and we trust that the next time you attack any society as a pretext for an electioneering address, you will fasten on the Society for the *Recovery of Drowned Persons*, who, no doubt, will be willing, if they shall be able, which I doubt, to administer relief.

A Member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.

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